

Genesis 44-18 to 47-27 Torah Reading (Parshat VaYigash)  
English version to be sung to the Torah tropes by Len Fellman  
Latest version December 22, 2020

**Judah intervenes**

44:18 He went up to Joseph—[Judah went up to him], [and said], “Please, my lord, [pray let me speak]:  
[let your servant] say a word [in the ears of my lord], and let your anger not flare up [against your servant], since you are just like Pharaoh.  
19 My lord inquired of your servants by asking, ‘Do you have a father or brother?’  
20 And we answered my lord: ‘We have a father who is old, and a child of his old age—the youngest.  
His brother is dead, [and there is left] [only he] [alone of the children] of his mother; and his father loves him.’  
21 And you said to your servants, ‘Bring him down to me, that I might set my eyes [upon him].’  
22 And we said to my lord, ‘He cannot—the boy cannot leave his father. Were he to leave his father, [his father would die].’  
23 And you answered your servants: ‘If [he does not come down]—your brother, the young one—with you,  
then never again, will you see my face.’  
24 And it was, when [we went up] to your servant, my father, [we told it all to him]—these words of my lord.  
25 Then he spoke—[our father, saying], ‘[Go back there], and buy us some food.  
26 [And we then said], ‘We cannot go down. [Only if] our brother, [the young one] [is with us] [can we go down],  
because [we’re not allowed] to see the face [of the man] if our brother, the young one, is not with us.’  
27 [And he said these words]—your servant, my father, to us: ‘As you know, [there were two sons] born to me by my wife.  
28 But gone is [one of them] [from me]. [I said to myself], “Alas, he is surely torn up”. And I have not seen him since.  
29 [If you should take] [also this one] from before me, and he meets with disaster,  
[then you will bring down] [my grey hair] in misery, to the grave.’  
30 [And so now], [when I come back] to your servant my father, and the boy is not with us, [end aliyah] he whose soul is bound to his soul,  
31 [And it will be], [if he should see] that the boy is no more, he will die.  
Brought down by your servants [will be the grey hair] [of your servant], [this man, our father], in grief, to Sheol!

44:32 Moreover, your servant [has pledged himself] [for the boy] to my father, by saying,  
'[If I do not] bring him [back to you], I will stand guilty before my father forever.'

33 [So now], [let me remain]: [let your servant stay] instead of the boy as the slave of my lord, so the boy may go back with his brothers.

34 For how can I go up to my father, if the boy does not go with me? [May it not be] that I witness the evil that would befall my father."

### Joseph makes himself known

45:1 Joseph could no longer [restrain himself] [before all] who were stationed around him. [He called out], "Have everyone depart from me."  
[So no one] stood around him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers.

2 He cried out his voice in weeping, and it was heard by the Egyptians; it was heard by the house of Pharaoh.

3 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?"

[But they were not able]—his brothers—to answer him, for they were confounded in his presence.

4 Then said Joseph [to his brothers], "Pray come close to me! [And they came close].

[And he said], "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.

5 But now, [do not be distressed], [and do not let pain] be in your eyes that you sold me hither.

For [it was to save life] that God sent me on before you.

6 [For there have been] two years of famine in the midst of the land, and for still another [five years] there shall be no plowing or harvest.

7 I was sent by God [ahead of you], to [make of you] a remnant on earth,  
to keep you alive [end aliyah] as a deliverance *extraordinaire* or: as a great body of survivors.

8 [And so now], [it was not you] that sent me here, but rather Elohim!

He has made me father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler of the whole land of Egypt.

9 [Make haste]—go up [to my father] and say [this to him], "Thus says your son Joseph:

[I was made] [by Elohim] lord of all of Egypt. Come down to me without delay.

10 You shall stay [in the region of Goshen], [you shall be] near to me,

[you as well] as your sons and the sons of your sons, your sheep, your oxen, [and all that is yours].

45:11 [I will provide] [for you] there—[for there are still] five more years of famine—  
[that you may not suffer want], you and your household, [and all that is yours].

12 Here, your eyes can see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, [that it is *my* mouth] that is speaking to you.

13 So tell my father of all my *kavod* (glory, high position) in Egypt, and of all that you have seen,  
[and make haste]: bring my father down here.

14 [He flung himself] on the neck of his brother Benjamin, and wept. [And Benjamin] wept on *his* neck.

15 Then he kissed all his brothers, and wept over them. Only then could his brothers talk to him.

#### Pharaoh's invitation

16 [An announcement]—[some news was heard] in the house of Pharaoh, saying this: “[They have come]—the brothers of Joseph.  
This was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants.

17 And said Pharaoh to Joseph, “Say this to your brothers, ‘This you must do: [Load up] your animals [and go directly] to the land of Canaan.

18 [You will take with you] [this father of yours] [as well as your households], [and come back] to me.

I [will give to you] the best of the land of Egypt, [end aliyah] [and you will eat] of the fat of the land.

19 You are hereby commanded: this you must do: [take for yourselves], from *Eretz Mitzrayim*,  
[carts or wagons] [for your small children] [and for your wives]. Carry your father down, and come.

20 And let your eyes have no regret [for your belongings], [since all the good things] of the whole land of Egypt—to you they are given.’ “

#### The return to Canaan

21 [And they did so]—the sons of Israel. Given [to them] [by Joseph] were wagons, as ordered by Pharaoh,  
[and he also] [gave to them] food for the journey.

22 [To all of them], [he also gave]—[to each one]—a change of clothes.

[But to Benjamin] he gave three hundred [pieces of silver], and five outfits of clothing.

23 [And to his father] he sent in like manner ten male donkeys, loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten [female donkeys]  
[which were loaded with] grain, [and also bread] [and food supplies] for his father, on the journey.

24 Then he sent his brothers on their way. He said [to them], “[Be not distressed or unsettled] on the journey.”

45:25 [And they went up] from Egypt. And they came to the land of Canaan, to Jacob their father.

26 And they told him—[they gave this report]: “Joseph is still alive! In fact, he is ruler of the whole land of Egypt.”

He grew numb in his heart, since he believed not them.

27 [They then related] [to him] [all the words] of Joseph that he had spoken [to them]. Jacob saw the carts and the wagons [end aliyah] that were sent by Joseph to carry him down. [And revived] was the spirit of Jacob their father.

28 [Then said] Israel, “[That is enough]: Yet is Joseph my son still alive. I must go and see him, before I die.”

### Jacob leaves for Egypt

46:1 [Then set out] Israel [with all that was his]. He arrived in Beer-Sheba, and he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

2 Then spoke *Elohim* | to Israel in a vision of the night, [calling to him]: “Jacob, | Jacob”. He replied, “I am here”.

3 [And God went on], “I am *ha El*, the God of your father.

[Do not be afraid] to go down to Egypt, since into a great nation I will make you there.

4 [I myself] [will go down] [with you] into Egypt, [and I too] [will bring you up] once again.

[And Joseph] will lay his hand on your eyes, (when you die).

5 Then set out Jacob from Beer-Sheba, and they carried—the sons of Israel—[they carried Jacob] [their father], [their young children] and their wives [in the wagons] that were sent by Pharaoh to carry Jacob.

6 They took [all of their livestock] and their possessions [that they had] acquired in the land of Canaan, and they came to Egypt: Jacob, and all his seed with him.

7 [He brought along his sons], and the sons of his sons, with him, [as well as his daughters], and the daughters of his sons. [Yes, all his seed], he brought with him to Egypt.

### Jacob's family

8 Now these [were the names] [of *B'nei Yisrael*], who came to Egypt: Jacob and his sons: the first-born of Jacob, Reuben.

9 The sons of Reuben: Enoch and Palu, Chetzron and Carmi.

10 The sons of Simeon: Yemuel [and Yamin], Ohad, Yakhin and Tzochar. And Saul, son of a Canaanite woman.

11 The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kehath, and Merari.

46:12 The sons of Judah: Er [and Onan], Shelah, Peretz, and Zerah. [But the first two had died]—  
Er and Onan—in the land of Canaan. And there were the sons of Peretz: Chetzron and Chamul.

13 The sons of Issachar: Tolah and Puvah, Yov, and Shimron.

14 The sons of Zebulun: Sered and Elon, and Yachle'el.

15 [All of the above] [were from the sons] of Leah, the ones [that she bore] to Jacob in Padam Aram. [There was also] Dinah, his daughter.  
[Every person] [of his sons] [and of his daughters]: there were thirty-three.

16 The sons of Gad: Tzifion, Chagi, Shumi, and Etzbon, Er and Arodi, and Areli.

17 The sons of Asher: Yimnah [and Yishvah], Yishvi and Beriah, and Serach their sister. The sons of Beriah were Cheyer and Malkiel.

18 [The above] [are from the sons] of Zilpah, who was given by Laban to Leah his daughter.  
She bore [these sons] to Jacob, a total of sixteen persons.

19 The sons of Rachel, wife of Jacob: Joseph and Benjamin.

20 [And there were] [born to Jacob] in the land of Egypt—  
the ones [born to him] by Asenat, daughter of Poti Phera, priest of On: Menasseh and Ephraim.

21 The sons of Benjamin: Bela and Bekher, and Ashbel, Gera and Naaman, Echi and Rosh, Muppin and Chuppim, and Ard.

22 [The above] [are from the sons] of Rachel, who were thus born to Jacob. [All these persons] numbered fourteen.

23 [The son of Dan]: Chushim.

24 The sons of Naphtali: Yachtze'el and Guni, Yetzer and Shilem.

25 [The above] [are from the sons] of Bilhah, who was given by Laban to Rachel his daughter.  
[She in fact bore them]—[she gave birth to all these] to Jacob, persons making seven.

26 [All of the persons] who came with Jacob to Egypt, who came out from his loins—  
aside from the wives [of Jacob's sons]—[all these persons] numbered sixty-six.

27 [Add to this] [the sons of Joseph] who were born to him in Egypt: another two persons. [Hence all of the persons] [of the household of Jacob]  
[and aliyah] who came to Egypt, (adding in Jacob and Joseph), numbered seventy.

### Joseph welcomes them

46:28 [Now it was that Judah] [had been sent] [ahead of him] to Joseph—  
to point out the way before him—to Goshen. And they arrived in the land of Goshen.  
29 [Then harnessed] Joseph his chariot, [and he went up] to meet Israel his father in Goshen.  
When he appeared [before his father], he fell on his neck. And he wept on his neck a long time.  
30 [And he spoke]—[Israel said these words] to Joseph: “I can die now; [after this]: that I have seen your face, that you are still alive.”  
31 Then said Joseph to his brothers and to [his father’s household], “[I will go up] and speak to Pharaoh. I will say to him,  
‘[My brothers] [and the household of my father], who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me.  
32 The men are shepherds of flocks. Men who tend livestock, they have been.  
[Their flocks of sheep] [and their herds of oxen]—all that is theirs, [they brought with them].  
33 [And so it shall be], when you are summoned by Pharaoh, and he asks, ‘[What is your occupation?]  
34 [You must answer]: ‘Breeder of livestock your servants have been from our youth until now, both we and our fathers,’  
[in order that you] may settle in the land of Goshen, since an offence to the Egyptians, are all shepherds of flocks.”

### Pharaoh grants an audience

47:1 So he came—[Joseph came], and reported to Pharaoh. [He said this]: “My father and brothers  
with their flocks and their herds and all that they own have come from the land of Canaan. They are now in the region of Goshen.”  
2 From among his brothers, he picked out [five men], and set them before Pharaoh.  
3 [And he inquired]—[Pharaoh did ask] of his brothers, “[What is your work?]  
“We are shepherds of flocks—we your servants. [This we are], [as were our fathers].”  
4 And [they said to Pharaoh], “To sojourn [in the land] have we come, [since there is no] [grazing land] for the flocks belonging to your servants,  
because severe is the famine in the land of Canaan. [Therefore now], may we dwell—we your servants—in the region of Goshen?”  
5 Then spoke Pharaoh to Joseph, saying, “Your father and brothers have come to you.

47:6 The land of Egypt: [before you] it lies. [In the best part] of the land, do settle your father and your brothers. Let them dwell in the region of Goshen. [And if you should know] [that there are among them] [men who are capable], [then put them in charge] as overseers of livestock—[of that which is mine].”

7 [Then brought in] Joseph—Jacob his father, [and had him stand] in the presence of Pharaoh.

And a blessing of greeting [Jacob gave to Pharaoh].

8 And said Pharaoh to Jacob, “[How old are you?] [How many the days] of the years of your life?”

9 [And gave Jacob] the answer to Pharaoh, “The days of the years of my sojourn are one hundred thirty years. Few [and difficult] have been the days in the years of my life.

[Yet they have not reached] the days in the years of the life of my fathers, in the days of their sojourn.”

10 Then he blessed him—Jacob, [bade Pharaoh farewell]. [end aliyah] [And he went out] from the presence of Pharaoh.

11 Then Joseph [found a place to settle] for his father and his brothers, and he gave [to them] a possession in the land of Egypt, the best part of the land, in the land of Rameses, [just as had been] commanded by Pharaoh.

12 [And sustained] Joseph his father and his brothers, [as well as] the whole house of his father, [with bread enough] to feed the young children.

### Joseph's agrarian policy

13 Of bread there was none in all the land, for severe was the famine exceedingly, [and they languished]—the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan, on account of the famine.

14 He collected—[Joseph gathered in]—all of the money to be found [in the land of Egypt] [and in the land of Canaan] [in payment for the food] that the people were buying, [and he brought it]—[Joseph took in]—all of the money to the house of Pharaoh.

15 [When they had used up] [all of the money] from [the land of Egypt] and from [the land of Canaan], [then they came]—[all the Egyptians]—to Joseph saying, “Give us some bread. Why should we die in your presence, since there is no more money.”

16 [And replied] Joseph, “Bring your livestock. I will give bread to you [in exchange for your cattle], if there is no money.”

47:17 So [they brought the livestock] to Joseph, and [he provided]—Joseph gave to them bread—in exchange for the horses, for [the flocks of sheep], for the herds of cattle, and for the donkeys. [He got them through] with bread [in return for all their livestock]. In that year [he got them through].

18 [When there ended] the year [for which they were provided], they came back to Joseph—in [the year that followed]. They said to him, “We won’t hide from my lord [the fact that] there is no more money, and the herds of cattle [have gone to my lord]. There is nothing left before my lord except for our bodies and our land.

19 [Why should it happen] that we perish [before your eyes], both ourselves and our land? Acquire us and our land in exchange for bread, [and we will become]—both ourselves and our land—slaves to Pharaoh. [Give us seed to sow] that we may live and not perish. Let the land not become desolate.”

20 And so did purchase Joseph [all the land] of Egypt for Pharaoh because [there sold—the Egyptians]—each man his field, so hard-pressed were they by the famine. Thus the land became Pharaoh’s.

21 [And as for the people]: he moved them to cities from one end or border of Egypt, unto the other.

22 [Only that land] belonging to the priests, [he did not take over] [because of the fact that] an allotment for the priests was given [by Pharaoh]. They ate the allotment that was given to them by Pharaoh, [and because of this], they did not sell their lands.

23 Then said Joseph to the people, “[It being the case that] I have purchased you [this very day], [and also your land], for Pharaoh, here [for you is seed]. [Go and plant] your fields.

24 It will be at the harvests, you will give one-fifth for Pharaoh. But four-fifths—the remaining parts—will be [for you] as seed [for the fields], [and for you to eat]; for those in your household, and for feeding your little ones.”

25 [The people replied], “[You have saved our lives!] [Since we have found favor] in the eyes of my lord, we will be slaves to Pharaoh.”

26 [He set down] this matter—[Joseph wrote it down]—as a statute, valid to this day: for the lands [that lie in Egypt], to Pharaoh goes a fifth, [with the exception] that the land of the priests alone did not belong to Pharaoh.

27 [Thus did settle] Yisrael in the land of Egypt, in the region of Goshen. [They acquired property] in it. [end aliyah] They bore fruit, and they multiplied greatly.



## Len Fellman's English readings with tropes

The purpose of this project is to translate *THE SONG OF THE TORAH* into English.

I work by comparing as many as ten English translations of a *pasuk* and creating a cantillated English sentence that sounds as much as possible like the Hebrew. They follow the Hebrew as closely as possible, word for word and trope by trope. The English language has an amazing flexibility, making it possible to make the English word order match that of the Hebrew quite well, allowing for some “poetic licence”, and some willingness on the part of the listener to be “carried” by the melody more than by the English syntax. The translation needs to sound good when *chanted*, but not necessarily when *spoken or read*.

Unlike most translations, these “transtropilations” are not intended to be a substitute for the Hebrew. On the contrary, they are meant to provide a “window” into the Hebrew text and its musical expression. My ideal listener knows enough Hebrew and has enough interest to follow the Hebrew in a bilingual text while the *leyner* is chanting the English version, to bring the Hebrew text to life, both *verbally* and *musically*. For this purpose I use *exactly* the same tropes in the English as in the Hebrew (almost always on the corresponding English word).

The texts can be used to do **consecutive translation**, i.e. leyning a phrase in Hebrew, followed by the corresponding phrase sung in English. Some of my recordings demonstrate this. I do this frequently when leyning for groups that either know little Hebrew, or that don't have a *chumash* in front of them.

I favor literal translations (e.g. “cut a covenant”) to call attention to Hebrew idioms, and towards simpler (even if less accurate) words (e.g. Ex. 12:7 “beam above the door” rather than “lintel”) to be easier to follow. If my readings provoke a discussion of the Hebrew, I consider that as justification for using less-than-idiomatic English. I try to find just the right balance between “literalness” and “listenable-ness”. A primary goal is throwing light on the Hebrew syntax.

In order to adapt the trope symbols to a left-to-right language like English, I *reversed* the direction of the trope symbols:

mercha tipcha munach tevir mapakh or yetiv kadma or pashta gersh gershayim telisha katana telisha gedola

(Generally speaking the *conjunctive tropes* such as mercha, munach, mapakh, kadma, and telisha katana “lean toward” the words they “conjoin” to, while the *disjunctive tropes* such as tipcha, gersh, gershayim, and telisha gedola “lean away” from the words that follow, so as to create a sense of separation.)

The trope symbol is normally placed under the accented syllable, unless it is a *pre-positive* accent (telisha gedola, placed *at the beginning* of the word or phrase) or a *post-positive* one (telisha katana or pashta, placed at the *end* of the word or phrase).

The Hebrew text frequently puts a *makkeph* (which is like a hyphen) between words in order to treat them as a single word to be chanted. I use a different system for English: If an entire English phrase is to be chanted to a single trope melody, I place it between grey brackets, as in this phrase from the Book of Lamentations:

[clings to her skirts]

The *leyner* is invited to fit this phrase to the *Eicha* “rivi'i” melody in whatever way seems most natural.

As a variant of the “grey bracket” device, I indicate pairs of tropes by “wrapping them around” the phrase which have the combined melody:

|                  |                               |                          |
|------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| mercha/tipcha    | kadma/geresh (or: azla, etc.) | mercha siluk             |
| (Renew our days) | (She weeps bitterly).         | (a fire-offering to God) |

Again, the *leyner* should decide on the most natural way to fit the phrase to the combined trope melody.

I put words in gray which I consider essential but which don’t strictly match the Hebrew. I also “pad” some phrases with extra words in gray to fill out a musical phrase nicely. Different trope systems vary widely in the length of the musical phrase used, so the words in gray may or not be used depending on the *leyner*’s cantillation system. In particular, the tropes *telisha g’dola* (ר), *legarmeh*, *metigah-zakef*, and *pazer* vary widely in the musical phrases used for chanting. (And please indulge me in my whimsical treatments of *shalsholet*.)

“*Metigah-zakef*” is a special trope combination which can be recognized by a kadma and a zakef katon appearing on the same Hebrew word (again, a *makkeph* makes two words into one). (There are several examples in Genesis 18 & 19, beginning with 18:16). I indicate this by placing the corresponding English phrase in grey brackets:

[Take heed—take care for yourself]

In some trope systems (viz. cantor Moshe Haschel in “Navigating the Bible II”) this is given a distinctive melody—I add extra syllables to fill out the musical phrase (as in “take care” in this example). Haschel’s system also chants the trope *munach* as *legarmeh* more often than other systems do.

I don’t write a single word of translation without first hearing the melody of the phrase in my mind, following one of two trope systems: The one by Portnoy and Wolff (*The Art of Cantillation*) or the one by Joshua R. Jacobson (*Chanting the Hebrew Bible*).

I transcribe the name יהוה as YHWH (in small caps). I almost always chant this as *yud-hey-vav-hey*, which I have discovered fits marvelously into several of the trope melodies. But of course the *leyner* can choose to pronounce it as “God” or “Adonai”.

Warning on the Hebrew text: The text I use for the English trope system is from Aryeh Kaplan; the Hebrew text I display is from Wikisource. Occasionally (but rarely) a phrase will use different tropes in the two systems.

*The English translations I mostly use (besides several scholarly commentaries) are the following:*

Aryeh Kaplan, ‘The Living Torah’ (1981) (also my source for proper names & transliterations)  
Richard Elliott Friedman, ‘The Bible With Sources Revealed’ (2003)  
Everett Fox, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (1997)  
The Stone Edition ‘Tanach’ (1996)  
JPS ‘Hebrew-English Tanach’, (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. 2000), *along with* Orlinsky, ‘Notes on the New Translation of the Torah’ (1969)  
Robert Alter, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (2004)  
Commentaries in the ‘Anchor Bible’ series  
Rotherham, The Emphasized Bible (1902)  
The Jerusalem Bible (1966) (also my source for topic headings)  
The New King James Bible (1982)